



Lithuanian contribution toward the American Folk Culture is being gradually and firmly added. Lithuanian dances are now danced from coast to coast and border to border. Now, the unique style of trimming Lithuanian Xmas trees has also attracted non-Liths throughout the country. Here we see a trio of ladies surrounding the Lithuanian style Christmas tree at the Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, N. Y. Mrs. Anders Osberg holds a string of little paper flags which are to go on the Swedish tree (left); Mrs. Violet Aperones is adding another geometric design, made of straw, to the Lithuanian tree; Miss Katherine L. Haviland, program director of the International Institute and a VILTIS pal, is adding the finishing touches. On the fir twig on the ground, can be seen the little rabbit (zuikelis) which is present where ever there is a fir tree, Christmas or otherwise. The above picture appeared in the Buffalo Evening News on Dec. 16, to whom we are grateful for the use of the picture.

XMAS IN BUFFALO, N. Y.

The International Institute of Buffalo, N.Y. presented International Christmas program in the Main Court of the Albright Art Gallery. A tree was in the center of the room, the dancing was around the tree and the audience sat around the room and various choruses sang from adjoining rooms. There was a Hungarian tree trimmed with candies and pastries (gorgeous cookies) which visitors in a home would take off the tree for a treat; the Swedish tree was with copper ornaments; the Lithuanian tree with its peculiar straw ornaments — its uniqueness merited a picture in Buffalo's Daily; a German tree with a creche and hand carved figures beneath it. The Poles prepared a "Vigilia" — a Christmas eve table arrangement and also a "szopka" made by a local Pole. In the center of the exhibits was a beautiful Italian painting of the Nativity set off by red velvet draperies and five pairs of iron wrought candle sticks — all from

Italy. The International House dancers and the children's group of Miss Norma Fritton presented the dance part of the program.

THE STAR TREE OF ALL TREES



Dolores Srupsa, Ateitis folk dancer, is seen admiring the complicated decorations around the Lithuanian "Eglaitė" — Christmas Tree. All the designs are made of straw, except for the birds which are made of empty egg shells with paper wings. Year after year the uniqueness of the Lithuanian tree draws throngs of admirers who acclaim it, without any question or doubt, as the star tree of all trees.

Tribune Foto

LITHUANIAN DAY AT MUSEUM

For the fourth year in succession, Chicago Lithuanians had very successful Lithuanian Day at the Museum of Science and Industry during the Christmas Around the World Festival. There were four programs during the day, with a total attendance of 3500.

The first afternoon program was presented by the students of St. Casimir Academy, with chorus, speaking chorus and soloists participating. The Academy's Lithuanian Choristers sang six Lithuanian Christmas carols, Yon's "Gesu Bambino", and "God Bless America as a finale. A beautiful Nativity tableau was presented during two of the Christmas songs. A very effective number was the choral recitation of an original Christmas poem written by Rita Dabuleviciute, a former DP, now attending the Academy. The school's folk dance group danced three Lithuanian folk dances.

The De La Salle High School Boys' Glee Club, directed by Mr. Leonard J. Simutis, Jr., gave a series of songs in the second program of the afternoon. Accompanist was Mrs. Zita Simutis. This Glee Club won the first class choral rating in a competition of Catholic High School choral groups last year. Mrs. Peter Dauzvardis was

mistress of ceremonies for both afternoon programs.

The evening program was presented at 7:30 and it portrayed the Christmas preparations of a Lithuanian family in a series of colorful tableaux. A Christmas repeated at 9 to capacity audiences in the Museum's Theatre. The program was interesting and varied, for Evescene, Kūčių vakaras, conveyed the serious, religious aspect of that evening to the audience. In the final scene, the audience enjoyed the full import of the festive season of Christmas Day, with singing, dancing, romancing, comedy, etc.

The evening programs were prepared under the auspices of the Lithuanian University Club. Participants were the Ateitis Lithuanian Dancers, the D. P. Mens' Chorus, members of the L. U. C., and others. Stage director was Mr. Gasparas Velička, a former D. P. who has had extensive experience as a professional actor and stage director in Lithuania and Germany. Mrs. Dauzvardis narrated during the programs, explaining Christmas customs, etc.

As usual, the Lithuanian Christmas Tree was one of the most outstanding in the display of Christmas Trees of many nations. During the entire Christmas season, it drew crowds of people around it to admire, study, sketch and photograph the original, intricate ornaments made of straw, eggshells, paper, feathers and nutshells. Photos of the tree, with Miss Dolores Srupsa, member of the Ateitis Dancers, standing by it appeared in the Chicago Tribune and in many Lithuanian newspapers.

JD.

COMMENTS AND LETTERS

Folk Dancing And Good Will

"Vyts, that which you are giving to the world cannot be measured in terms of anything but good will and friendship and I find in using the same attitude, as my school consists of about half colored and half white. There is nothing that brings folks together so easily and so well as folk dancing. I deeply appreciate having come to know you for that.

Mr. H. Suedemeyer, Buffalo, N. Y.

"Received VILTIS and very much enjoyed the articles. It was as I expected. It showed your independent judgement and was not influenced by one side or the other. I was also glad you appreciate what we are trying to do here even if you don't approve of everything."

Walter Grothe — San Francisco, Cal.

"Your VILTIS for November was delightful and I am happy that you could see the good side of Californian dancing, where the emphasis is on the dancer instead of the dance."

Grace West, Sausalito, Cal.

"Your December VILTIS is lovely. I liked your article on Salt Lake and the Mormons. We spent a few days there in June and enjoyed the city and the People."

Irene Qually — Oshkosh, Wis.

Californian Polkas

"Again let me tell you how much we enjoyed your short stay in San José. We found your dances delightful and all the clubs around are doing them with a will.

"Your Lithuanian Polka! I think you would be amazed at the number of "authentic" steps being done "just the way Vyts did it". One Bay-region teacher liked it so much that he is putting it into everything regardless!

But no matter how varied their steps seem, one thing is certain Polkas in California are a more bouncy than they used to be!"

Adele Coolidge, San Jose, Cal.

ATEITIS

Hi-gang-say performing at the Museum of Science and Industry this year was fun. The play we participated in brought out our acting ability individually and as a group.

The program was very successful in that singing and dancing was cleverly introduced to keep it going at a lively pace. As far as we could see there were no dead spots in the program, and the large volume of applause after any one of our dances proves that we are still very popular. Let's work hard and stay popular.

Friday Dec. 2nd we had a treat, I'm sure thrilled all of us. The movies of the St. Louis National Folk Festival of 1949 were made available by the United States Army.

Since all groups could not see the film we invited representatives from the various Folk Dance Groups in Chicago to come to our showing of the film. Each group that participated in the Festival had a few minutes of the film devoted to them. Our dance "Vedaras" was featured as the Lithuanian contribution.

Besides the terrific film, we had a fine party afterwards, dancing and refreshments were enjoyed by all present. —Music by John Masuka.

Right here we would like to thank John Balauskas for his use of equipment and work in the showing of the film.

The Old Folks at Oak Forest, Illinois seemed to like our dances when we performed there for their Christmas Party December 18th. We were all willing and happy to bring a little entertainment to those fine people.

Our Christmas party this year was as much a success as last year. Dancing, singing, refreshments and a hilarious grab bag produced an enjoyable evening for evening were—were—happy—that is—happy!!!

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH DEPT.

Personality of the month—Cecilia Cecilia Puksmis—although she has no partner she still manages to fill in beautifully into all of the dances without griping.

Some advice for Clem Gaushas—watch where you make love to your women.

Some advice for Eleanor Mellas—behave yourself.

Vince Samaska's cake for the "Film Party" was dee—lush—ous.

And thanks to the girls—Bernice Kaminskas, Ruth Strubas, Julie Kaupas and Dolores Srupsa for the fine job they did on the refreshment committee. —Kisses and silks to you.

Fran Williams and Ruth Strubas will soon be in Nursing School ("OH Nurse Hold My Hand").

John Girsks did the "Grand Mill" with us for our guests after the movies and he was great—after such a long absence he made no mistakes—nice going fella.

Mr. Buracas don't dare throw Julie Bachunas around in the Grand Mill. I'll report you to the S. P. C. A.—you meanie you.

Dolores Srupsa—your picture was in the paper. I saved you a copy in case you missed it—Slight Charge—

Eddie Kaupas went to Alabama with Vyts during the New Year holidays to do some swimming in the Bay around Fairhope. Eddie came back a Rebel. He says he loves the Southern Gals. Sho Nuff!

Vince Samaska, active Ateitietis, spent the holidays in Southern California, flying both ways.

The Ateitis members were gaping with surprise when they saw their Genevieve Doygin do some neck-breaking acrobatic stunts at the Sophie Barcus concert. Are you all there, Gene?

Pranas